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ALI & YASOUF,

OR

ENVY THE WRONG ROAD

TO

HAPPINESS;

A

MORAL TALE.

" O Happiness, our Being's end and aim,
Good, Ease, Content, whate'er thy name;
Plant of celestial seed, if dropp'd below,
Say, in what soil deign'st thou to grow!"

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ALI AND YASOUF;

A MORAL TALE.

"O MY dear father, how wretched am I!" exclaimed Yasouf, one day, concealing his tears in the bosom of the respectable Abul Bider. "I possess gold and jewels to an immense value; my father bequeathed me magnificent palaces, and in the country I have villas, whose prospects and gardens are objects of

envy to our Califs. The roads teem with slaves and camels, laden with my riches; in every port the flags of my ships float in the air, and yet I possess not one contented happy hour! You, Abul-Bedir, were the friend of my father; be also mine; and may your benevolent counsel direct me to that happiness which incessantly flies from me!"

Abul-Bedir, with a smile, took the hand of young Yasouf, and replied, "And do you not think, in the whole extent of your possessions, there are some more wretched than yourself? who, deprived of the primary requisites of life——"

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"I confess," rejoined Yasouf, "that, in point of wealth, I have nothing more to desire. I only complain that I am unhappy."

"You are not happy, Yasouf! While you are environed by so many unfortunate beings whose necessities you might relieve, you are undeserving of pity, since the blessing you so ardently seek is within your own power. Do you know Ali? he whom the people have surnamed the Sage? Imitate his practice, and you will find happiness! It is not difficult. But first attend to what Ali does, and the manner in which he does it!"

"Ali lived about two day's journey from Bagdad, in a delightful

valley, surrounded by hills, and shadowed by the most umbrageous trees. His house was placed at the spot where the principal roads which conducted to Bagdad met. An equal number of doors, corresponded with the number of the roads, the entrance to which was rendered easy and plain by the distinct paths he had opened. These avenues were planted with palm trees, adorned with banks enameled with the most odoriferous flowers, on which the weary traveller might repose; while cooling fountains, supplied from the most clear and limpid reservoirs, incessantly flowing, were appropriated to relieve the thirsty camel. A hundred slaves,

slaves, inmates of the contiguous cottages, were appointed to invite travellers, in the most civil and pressing language, to enter the abode of Ali. They were introduced into saloons, where the most costly cushions and sofas induced them to a soft repose; and, while one part of the attendants were busied in presenting salvers of fruit, cakes, cheese, and cups filled with goat's milk, the other unloaded the camels, conducted them to the fountains, and fed them under the shade of the thick palm branches.

"In the mean time, some female domestics, of a pleasant and affable demeanour, put the perfumed baths in order; and when the travellers' strength

strength had been recruited by immersion and repose on the softest couches, their ears were enchanted by the sweetest and most harmonious strains, which were continued till their eyelids sank again under the influence of gentle slumbers.

"When the dawn appeared, they were awakened by the sound of lutes, and the melodious voices of the young choral slaves. Again they were laved in the bath, and after an abundant breakfast had given tone and vigour to their frames, they recommenced their journey, blessing the goodness, the wisdom, and the hospitality, of Ali; hence his name, repeated a thousand times by the voice of Gratitude,

was

was carried into every country, and known in all languages."

Yasouf, who had heard of the reputation of Ali, reflected for a moment, deliberating within himself, if the pursuit of a similar life would render him happy. After a few moments of silence, he exclaimed, throwing himself into the arms of Abul-Bedir, "Yes, my father, yes! I will follow your counsel, and make you the founder of my happiness. Fame shall bear my name to the utmost kingdom of the earth. On the snow-capped mountains of Siberia shall the traveller, when he returns into the bosom of his family, relate my kindnesses to his listening offspring, and in the re-

remotest deserts of Arabia shall the recital of my liberality compel the hospitable Arab to acknowledge, that Yasouf is more hospitable than he."

From this day Yasouf employed a thousand workmen on the other side of Bagdad, at a place where various roads met, and conducted to the sea. "All my wishes," exclaimed he with transport, "will be shortly accomplished! My beneficence shall surpass that of Ali, and I shall behold my name engraven on the palaces of kings, while his shall be effaced from the cabin of the poorest slave."

A short time sufficed to raise a magnificent structure of a quadrangular

gular form, one of the sides of which measured three hundred feet. A superb colonnade of marble environed the building; a hundred gates opened their entrances, and four hundred black slaves, in military dresses, stood centinels, who were expressly charged to invite all passengers and travellers to enter, and partake of the hospitality of Yasouf. In the middle of the palace, the most superb baths, served by the most young and lovely female slaves, were constantly prepared. The most exquisite music, performed by the most skilful musicians, and the most perfect melodists of both sexes, resounded through every quarter

quarter of the mansion. No sooner, too, did a traveller express a desire to continue his journey, than a slave presented him with a silken carpet, on which was elegantly embroidered the name of Yasouf, to serve as a passport, and a memorial of generosity. On the several gates of the Palace the following inscription presented itself:

The Asylum for all Travellers.—
This is the Palace of Yasouf the Benevolent, the Father of the Unhappy!

The inhabitants of Bagdad flew in crowds from the city, to share in the magnificent entertainment of Yasouf; and, after having entered the

Ali & Yasouf

the baths, and partaken of the most delicious repasts, they returned, overwhelmed with astonishment and admiration. In the same manner were all strangers received, and they failed not to subscribe to the same feelings and sentiments.

Yasouf felt happy.—His chief pleasure lay in walking disguised through the allées which conducted to his palace, in explaining its beauties to travellers, in being himself the auditor of its euloginm and their rapturous expressions of delight; and in following them with his eyes till a new caravan arrived to engage his attention.

One day, an aged man, who was inhaling the cool breeze under the

shade of the thick palm trees, stopped in front of one of the sides of the palace, and, notwithstanding the dimness of his sight, he stood in rapture at the view of its magnificence. Yasouf accosted him, and said, "Good old man, have you any wish I can gratify?"—"Ah!" replied the other, "dare a poor and an unfortunate old man have any wishes?"

"Have you not read the inscription placed over the gates of this palace?"

"I did read it- -but fear lest—"

"Fear nothing here, for Yasouf is the exact resemblance of the star which enlightens us, as friendly to the poor as the rich."

With

With a timid step the venerable man approached the palace. One of the slaves observing that he hesitated to seat himself on one of the marble benches, persuaded him to sit there till he was recruited. Yasouf now made a sign to an attendant, and the old man was conducted into the palace. The slave proudly displayed to him its wealth and beauty; charming females next attended to point the way to the bath, into which the sweetest essences had been thrown; a sumptuous repast awaited him when he came out, and the next day, previously to his departure, a slave presented him with a robe of silk, and a purse containing a hundred pieces

of gold, at the same time saying, "Farewell, worthy old man: never cease to bless the beneficent soul of Yasouf!"

Yasouf, who, disguised, was waiting without, now hastened to join the enraptured old Malac. "Well," said he, "Yasouf, I believe, has confirmed all that I related of him?" —"His generosity and kindness," replied Malac, "indeed exceed all that you have said. Behold this robe and this purse, filled with a hundred pieces of gold—the gift of one of the most munificent of mortals!"

Yasouf listened with delight to the praises which flowed from the lips of Malac, and as he repeated them,

them, insensibly conducted him into a deep umbrageous wood, where he had told some slaves to lie in wait in order to take away the hundred pieces of gold, reserving to himself the pleasure of farther augmenting his aged guest's surprise by the gift of a more considerable sum. At the appointed signal, the slaves darted upon Yasouf and Malac, and presented a dagger to the breast of the latter, who, with a tremulous accent, exclaimed, "Here are a hundred pieces of gold, which I have just received from the generous Yasouf: take them; but in pity suffer me to proceed on my journey." The pretended thieves took the purse, and, as they examined

attentively the valuable robe which Malac wore, he readily took it off, and put it into their hands. "Have you nothing else?" said one of the robbers, in a tone of ferocity which might have alarmed the most undaunted. Without waiting for an answer, they began to inspect his garments, when the old man fell at their feet, and with streaming eyes intreated them rather to take away his life than a small piece of gold which he drew from his bosom, and displayed before them.

At a glance from Yasouf, the slaves were contented with the purse and the robe, and, after having pillaged their master, as agreed, to give a colour to the whole proceeding,

ing, they rushed into the thickest part of the trackless wood. "Let us fly!" exclaimed the miserable Malac; "let us away! but, ever blessed be the holy Prophet, I have saved my piece of gold!"

"We will return to the palace," said Yasouf. "The generous man, who has already laden you with his bounties, will be happy to repair your loss. Malac, however, inattentive to this counsel, increased his pace, and seemed only occupied in securely placing his piece of gold in the folds of his turban. Yasouf, unable any longer to restrain his curiosity, said, "Why do you attach so much value to this single

piece

piece of gold?" "It is the gift of the sage Ali!" replied Malac.

"Of Ali! Say, why do you esteem it above that of Yasouf?"

"Because Yasouf's was an act of charity."

"And was not Ali's piece of gold the same?"

"That is true,—but you do not know Ali. A thousand times would I cheerfully risk my life to preserve this token of his friendship!"

"Whence, may I ask, arises so much estimation for this miserable present of Ali?"

"It was accompanied by the gift of his heart! But listen: I was close to his house, passing as he reposed under some shading palms. I was scarcely

scarcely seen, before he came out to meet me, extended his hand, and said in the most friendly manner, "Good morning, brother!"—and at that instant I conceived an affection for him which will only be extinguished with my life.—After having passed through several vistas of date trees, we seated ourselves upon a verdant bank; he then surveyed me with looks of inward satisfaction and amiable disquietude, requesting me to inform him of the place of my departure and destination.—The recital of my sorrows, and particularly that part in which I mentioned the cruel loss of my son, torn from me by death in a tour he made into Persia, excited his

his tears, and we mingled our regrets together; and, when he perceived that I intended to leave him, and pass the night at the caravansera with the other travellers, he said, "The proper asylum for you, my friend, is my house. You want a friendly bosom, in which you may pour out your sorrows. Behold, —here is mine.—Equally unfortunate with yourself, I deplore the loss of a son whom the Almighty snatched from me in the flower of his age. You shall see my daughter: her tenderness will alleviate our mutual misfortunes, and, in return for the comfort she will administer to your bosom, you shall bestow on her your benediction. We entered,

and

and a frugal supper was served up. —Here an unreserved friendship, added to the attentions of Ali and his daughter, shed into my soul, sorrowing with its woes, a salutary balm; and, for the first time, I slept with a hope of experiencing consolation.

"My rest was tranquil, and I felt at waking that my heart was relieved. I neglected not to kneel in gratitude to heaven, and was invoking its choicest blessings on the head of the benevolent Ali, when he entered and demanded, if my son's name was not Abid. I replied in the affirmative. "Blessed be the great Prophet!" exclaimed he; "then can I discharge a debt which has for a long

long term laid heavily on my conscience." He then called to his daughter, and directed her to bring a purse, containing a hundred pieces of gold. He was immediately obeyed.—"Take this purse," said he to me. "Your son Abid entrusted it to me at the time of his departure for Ispahan, when he requested me to remit it to you, within a year, if he did not return. I have long sought an opportunity of conveying it, but hitherto I have met with no traveller to whom I thought I could safely confide it."

"Convinced that my son had never possessed such a sum, and almost certain that he had not directed his course towards Ispahan,

I re-

I refused to accept a purse of such considerable value. Ali, imagining that I had penetrated into his design, displayed evident signs of disappointment. I passed that day with him; but the following morning, as I was going into the garden to offer up my prayers, I lifted my hand to my turban, and felt something unusual in it. There I found concealed the hundred pieces of gold, which Ali had secreted not only to overcome my delicacy, but to spare me even the acknowledgement. I however opened the purse, took out one piece, and, having placed the remainder under one of the pillows on which I had slept, I took leave of the good Ali and his

amiable daughter, with a heart full of friendship and gratitude."

During this interesting discourse, Yasouf's eyes were invariably fixed on the ground. "But why," demanded Yasouf, "did you accept of Yasouf's hundred pieces of gold, and refuse those of Ali?"

"I can scarcely tell you," replied Malac, after a moment of reflection:—"and this appears extraordinary to myself as well as to you. But I felt honoured by the present of Ali: his gold to me seems inestimable; I thought of nothing but the grace and the delicacy with which it was presented to me. I quite forgot my poverty, and enjoyed an unalloyed happiness;

ness; but with Yasouf I felt all the humility which is attached to indigence and misery. His conduct debased me, and his present to me seemed the price of that humiliation I was compelled to undergo. Yasouf is profuse only: Ali is beneficent. The first astonishes by the magnificence of his palace, the marble seats erected under the palm-trees, his blazoned saloons, baths which might adorn the seraglio of the grand Signior, carpets of silk, and embroidered cushions.: but, to what serves all this splendor, only to convince us the more forcibly that none of it belongs to the lowly and humble. The latter, on the contrary, with a wooden house,

banks of turf, simple neat baths, and mats and coverlids of a warm plain manufacture, makes all who visit him feel as if they were joint-possessors of the whole, and enjoying the ease and freedom of their own homes. In a word, Yasouf does good merely from a view to his own happiness—Ali solely for that of others."

"Wretch," vociferated Yasouf, darting at the old man a look of indignation, "I am Yasouf! Farewell!" Throwing a purse full of gold on the ground, he precipitately withdrew. Heedless in his chagrin whither he went, he became bewildered in the vast forest, where, amidst the tears of jealousy and despair,

despair, he burst forth:—"How miserable am I! A vile mendicant despises my donations, and would sacrifice his life for the preservation of Ali's paltry token of friendship!" From this day, the soul of Yasouf became a prey to the most acute chagrin: his palace lost its charms—his heart, insensible to the encomiums he before enjoyed, was now occupied only with the thirst of surpassing Ali in generosity. Seating himself constantly in the way, he loaded the traveller with his favours, he addressed the poor by the name of brethren, and made a point of serving them himself. The humble passenger, astonished, forbad it, threw himself at his feet,

and the appellations of generous, kind, benevolent, were the least expressions of his gratitude. Seduced by this illusion, Yasouf thought he was now within reach of the sovereign good. "A little time," said he, "and my fame shall surpass that of Ali!"

One day, seated under a palm-tree shade, and absorbed in a profound reverie, he heard the footstep of one approach, whose head was bowed down, his visage sad, his cheeks sunken with sorrow, and his eyes bathed in tears. "Another unfortunate!" exclaimed Yasouf. "Would that he may find in me the termination of his grief!"—The stranger, however, regardless either of

of the palace of Yasouf, or seeking refreshment under the shade of the palm trees, proceeded on his way with greater speed. Yasouf now called to him, entreated him to stop, and disclose the cause of his apparent unhappiness. The stranger at length, ceding to his instances, took a place beside him in a private bower, and thus addressed him: "I am surnamed Kalam! I possessed the most lovely woman in Bagdad, who constituted my chief happiness. I esteemed her, and was repaid with an equal love. Could I possess greater bliss in this life? One day, seated in the little orchard, which bordered our cottage, my wife sung to her lute some

of

of her sweetest melodies in praise of a married life. The sky was cloudless, the evening refreshing and calm, the birds, jealous of the tones of her voice, suspended their concerts to listen; in short, all nature seemed to partake in the fascination I felt. Reposing at her feet, on a bed of violets, my eyes threw back upon her's all that affection with which my heart was warmed.

"Suddenly the door of the orchard was opened, and I saw Almonam advance: he was the favourite of the Calif. While my wife pulled down her veil, I respectfully approached Almonam. "Magnificent Signior," said I, "what are your commands with me?" "I wish

wish to ascertain," replied he, "if the person of the sweet chantress I have heard is equal to her voice!" Compelled to indulge his request, I begged my wife to unveil; but, O despair! the heart of the favourite instantly became deeply enamoured of her beauty. Drawing me aside, the base monster dared to offer me a thousand pieces of gold, if I would consent to yield my wife to his power. With difficulty I suppressed my just indignation, and refused; but the enraged Almonam made a sign to his slaves, who bore away my unfortunate spouse, and, in spite of all my entreaties and opposition, tore her from my protecting arms over the distant hills.

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"I carried my complaint to the Calif; but infamous witnesses, subborned for base purposes, accused me of treasonable crimes, and I was banished from Bagdad, under the pain of loss of life, if I ever approached its walls."—At this part of the story, a torrent of tears covered the visage of Kalam.—"Unhappy man," exclaimed Yasouf, "how much do I pity you!" but is there no remedy for the misery you endure? Come with me to my palace: there select one of the most beautiful of my slaves: take her, and endeavour, if possible, to forget the unhappy event!"

Kalam replied, with a deep sigh, "Yasouf, Yasouf, how little do you

you know of virtuous ove! The most charming slave in Persia could not restore my happiness, nor ameliorate the chagrin which consumes me. My wife, my wife only!"

"Well," said Yasouf; "let me persuade you to remain some days with me: if I am not able to remove your load of affliction, my solicitudes, my council, my tenderness, may furnish some alleviation to it." Yasouf again pressed this upon Kalem, and he at length consented to stay.

Yasouf took advantage of this time to go and propose to Almonam the exchange of one of his fairest slaves for the wife of the unfortunate guest

guest who so bitterly deplored her loss. But the answer returned was, that the first step Yasouf took for this purpose would cost him his life. "Behold what a danger I have escaped to serve you!" said Yasouf to the inconsolable Kalam, after he had narrated his embassy to Almonam: "Alas! you see, all hope is gone! but partake of my wealth, my gold, that I may have the consolation of rendering you some service."

Kalam, penetrated with that gratitude which such attentions and friendship could not fail to inspire, at length took leave of the generous Yasouf, who, as he saw him depart, inwardly said to himself, "I am

free

free from all self-reproach; and, in this affair, not even Ali could have done more!"

A month had scarcely elapsed when a litter, guarded by a horseman, presented itself to the eyes of Yasouf. He hastened to meet the travellers; but how great was his surprise, when he recognised Kalam, who threw himself into his arms ejaculating, "Generous Yasouf, I am the happiest of men! my wife is restored to me; I shall leave Bagdad for ever,—never to return to scenes where crime triumphs and innocence is without a shield."

Yasouf, after having admired the beauty of Kalam's companion, conducted the pair under some date

trees, and requested they would favour him with a relation of the extraordinary means by which their re-union had been effected.

"It is," said Kalam, "owing to that best of men,—to Ali,—that I now enjoy happiness;" and he then recounted the means which Ali had employed to effect this end.

Kalam, after having separated from Yasouf, careless whither he went, and a prey to the darkest despair, wandered in a route which, after several days' march, conducted him to the seraglio of Ali; who, remarking the alteration which had taken place in the countenance of the unfortunate man, and imagining that it must arise from some deep

and

and profound sorrow, came up to him; and, walking by his side as if he was travelling the same road, said, as he greeted him, "*The great Prophet commiserates the unhappy.*"*

"All the unhappy?" said Kalam; "Oh!—no, no!"—He then commenced the detail of his woes.—Ali listened, and while he conversed on the bitter subject, led him by a circuitous route to his own dwelling: having made him promise to go in, he said, "I am sensible, from all that you have recounted of the generosity of Yasouf, that little hope remains of my being

 able

* The usage in the Levant is, to quote a passage in the Alcoran when a stranger is addressed.

able to render you any effectual service; nevertheless, indulge me in the same favour you did him; and consent to abide with me a short time."—Kalam made no objection; and, the next day Ali, pretending some urgent business, which would compel him to be absent for several days, made Kalam promise to await his return; at the same time requesting him to be the guardian and comfort of his daughter.—The two friends having embraced, Ali went in search of one of the worthy companions of his youth.—"I am about to undertake," said he, "a journey which may prove hazardous, if not fatal.—If I perish, be you the father, the tutor, the friend,

friend, and the counsellor, of my Zulima."—"I affirm to you that I will," replied this venerable friend. "I am then satisfied.—Adieu," replied Ali, and he took the road for Bagdad.

Arrived there, he immediately repaired to a spot by which the Calif daily passed in returning from the mosque.—Throwing himself at his feet, he said, "Sovereign Lord of all true believers, I have discovered a conspiracy against thy life; nay, against thy honour.—Deign to cast a look of kindness on an old man, whose only regret is, that he has no other sacrifice than a few days to offer for the good of his country.—ask no recompence;—for ho-

nours at my age have no longer charms; and as to my son, whom I might have been ambitious for, he has gone before me to the arms of our holy Prophet.—My fortune more than supplies my wants;—all I entreat is to indulge me with a hearing in private!"

The Calif kindly raised him up, and, having conducted him into one of the inner apartments of his palace, said, "Speak freely—what have you to disclose?" Ali, after having imparted in the most brief manner the misconduct of Almonam, proceeded, with all that impression and courage which the cause he was defending inspired: "Thou art adored by thy people,

as

as the very image of the Omnipotent. History places thy name among the most virtuous of the Calif race; but, notwithstanding thy wisdom, the crimes of thy courtiers recoil upon thyself. Secure in thy favour, they pursue their wickedness without restraint, and thou thinkest not that every act of their oppression substracts a ray from the glory which environs thee.—Father and Judge of thy people, I demand justice:—decree that the wife of my friend be restored to him."

The Calif, struck with the eloquence of the old sage, said, after having contemplated with respect his venerable countenance, and

lively

lively eyes, in which all the fire of youth seemed still to sparkle, "What remuneration are you to receive from your friend, for thus venturing your life for his sake?"—"No other," replied the old man, "than the pleasure of dying in the performance of a benevolent action;—but I am not alarmed;—thy heart, O Calif, never committed a wrong!" "You have triumphed, respectable sage!" cried the Calif; "a protecting angel hovers over you;—Know, that no mortal dares to hold a similar language before me;—but, be under no apprehension.—In a short time you shall have my answer."

Ali withdrew.—The Calif sent for

for Almonam; and, after having reproached him in the severest terms with the atrocity he had committed, ordered him not only to make immediate restoration of the wife of Kalam, but to publish through Bagdad, that, if any future accusation were preferred against him, upon the fact being ascertained, he should be publicly executed.—Almonam, confounded and trembling, withdrew; and in less than an hour Ali quitted Bagdad, escorting away the wife of the happy Kalam.—In three days they arrived at the habitation of Ali, who at a short distance perceived his daughter and Kalam sitting under the shade of an alcove, in which they had every evening

evening expected the return of their aged friend.

"*The great Prophet commiserates all the unhappy*," exclaimed Ali, in a transport of joy, unveiling the face of Kalam's wife, and placing her in the extended arms of Kalam.—Who can paint the happiness which rushed into the bosoms of this excellent pair?—their tears, their murmuring accents, their looks, and joy?—For some moments they forgot that they were indebted for this happiness to Ali;—but their sense of gratitude soon returned, and they would have embraced the feet of their benefactor, but he raised them up, kissed them, and with eyes full of tears

tears said, "It is I,—I only, who ought to return thanks to you!—am I not the happiest of the three?" —They remained with Ali a few days, and, when they had perfectly recovered their fatigue, they departed; leaving the virtuous old man with a heart pleased and elevated at the happiness which it had been able to confer.

This recital was to the soul of Yasouf a source of shame and regret.—He beheld with an envious eye the tears of gratitude which the virtuous couple had shed, and the tribute of just eulogium which they lavished upon the benevolent Ali was irksome to his ears.—"Unhappy that I am!" said he, mentally:

tally: "While Ali lives, in vain does Yasouf aspire to the titles of Great and Generous."—"Is Ali old?" demanded he of the pair.—They replied, "Long, long may heaven preserve this worthy man, who has employed eighty-years in acts of goodness!"

Yasouf, unable any longer to contain the emotions of his jealousy, abruptly took leave of Kalam and his wife. "Perhaps," said he, now he was alone, "a severe observer would readily discover those blemishes in Ali which escape the transient inspection of the poor wretches whom he succours and caresses."—Yasouf had a friend, who from custom, a similarity of sentiments, and gratitude.

tude, had been attached to him from infancy.—Him he requested to reside for a time in the neighbourhood of Ali, and with a vigilant eye to trace him in his private life.—The friend consented,—and departed; but, after several months had passed away without producing a letter, Yasouf wrote to him to return.—The answer sent in reply commenced with this passage of the Alcoran:—

"*If, O man, thy cottage be placed near that of the righteous, pull it not down; for thou residest in the neighbourhood of the Divinity!*"

"Yasouf,

In vain do you press me to return.—I abide with Ali. I

love him, and his friendship is the sole happiness to which I aspire; but you hate him, and this must dissolve our friendship.—Your favours in comparison of his are but froth and vanity;—his are native gold; and happy is that mortal on whom he showers them.—Adieu then, for ever, since I remain with Ali."

Yasouf, enraged, tore the letter of his perfidious friend into a thousand pieces. "Let the gates of my palace never be opened more!" cried he aloud to his slaves: "He is a lunatic, who here below places his happiness in doing good.—And thou, odious old man, who hast deprived me of my dearest hopes, my

my happiness, and my friend, shalt dread my fury, shalt sink under my vengeance—for thou shalt perish!"

Henceforward, his palace was closed to all the world, nor were travellers even permitted to repose under the shady palm-trees, which adorned its avenues. A prey to despair, Yasouf sought the most solitary retreats, repeating to himself, "Who shall dare to interrupt the course of my just revenge? Ali is old; therefore, in immolating him, I shall merely cut off a few hours of his existence, and open to myself, perhaps, the path to happiness and glory. The die is cast,—he must perish!"

Yasouf, with a poniard concealed

in his bosom, repaired in disguise to the habitation of Ali.—All the way on his journey he met no one who did not celebrate the virtues of this venerable sage, and bless his name;—but his ears were ungratified with the least mention of his own name. This augmented his dissatisfaction; and, overcome by the gloomiest despair, he seated himself under a beautiful date tree, where a slave saw him, and kindly pressed him to take some refreshment.—Yasouf refused, and demanded to be shewn to Ali. "He is rarely here," replied the slave mildly, "but we expect him to-morrow; if, however, you have nothing very important

tant to impart, I must inform you that he prefers remaining unknown."

Yasouf, without returning any answer to the attendant, entered the first vista which presented itself, and continued to wind with it, till he became deeply advanced in a wood, where he followed the track of a narrow footway till it terminated at a thatched dwelling, overshadowed by two tall linden trees in bloom.—At a short distance, he observed a young girl, reading with great attention: the fine texture and transparency of the veil which covered her face, permitted him to trace the beauties it but half concealed. Struck with admiration, he could not withdraw his regards;—

his malice was calmed, his rage became extinguished; he wished to approach nearer to the maiden, unperceived; but the rustling of a rose-bush betrayed him. The young female startled, looked around, and at length cast her fine expressive blue eyes upon those of the exhausted Yasouf.—Shutting her book, she laid it on a verdant hillock, and with a light foot tripped to meet him.

"Young stranger," said she to him, in a tone of enchanting sweetness, and with a face tinted with the carnation of modesty, "do you wish to take repose in our cottage? Methinks you look fatigued;—perhaps you have come a great way?"

"From

"From the seraglio of Ali only," replied Yasouf. "Ah!—then the little I can offer you in this humble abode," said she, smilingly—"Will be more agreeable," interrupted Yasouf, "than all the treasures and gifts of Ali."—"You are too kind." "Let us enter."

"And why not continue here?—This spot, embellished by thy presence, will be but too agreeable!"

"That is just as you please; but my father not being at home, it must rest with me to perform the honours of the house."

She then entered into the cottage, and holding with one hand a basket filled with dates, oranges, melons, and figs, while the other presented a jug

a jug of milk, she took a seat by her guest. The eyes of Yasouf ran over her figure with delight, and while he was at a loss to select one charm as more attractive than the other, her's were employed in selecting the ripest and most delicate fruits to offer him.

The sun had nearly finished its career, and only sported a few oblique rays through the tops of the palm-trees, when suddenly the fair villager exclaimed, "Here is my father!"—Yasoufbeheld a venerable old man advance, on whose tranquil and dignified forehead, which bore testimony to his age, was imprinted that meekness, peace, and serenity, which are the result of an upright

right and innocent life. The sage affectionately embraced his daughter, tendered his hand to Yasouf, and, having learned that he called himself Mosul, he requested him to take a seat by his side.

"May I," said he, "without impropriety, enquire the motive of your journey?"—"I desire myself to know," replied Yasouf, "if Ali be, as it is every where reported, the most amiable and generous of men." "It is true," replied the ancient, "that all the world report him to be so.—But, for my part—" "For your part!" rejoined Yasouf briskly,—"I have often," continued the sage, "cause of complaint against him. From his infancy he has

has made me the repository of his secret thoughts."

"Blessed be Mahomet," exclaimed Yasouf, "I have also heavy subjects of complaint against him."

The ancient with a smile said, "Young man, I wish you to become my friend: come, let us enter my cottage."

They went in.—The sage was Ali himself!—His daughter readily knew by a sign, that he wished to remain undiscovered. They both took a seat directly opposite to Zulima, and commenced a conversation, in the course of which Yasouf's heart spoke without reserve, and laid itself open in the most favourable

vourable point of view to the old man. "I am extremely pleased with you," said the latter: "rely upon my lasting friendship, and believe that I possess nothing of which you may not share."

"You tell me," said Yasouf, "that I may share in all your possessions —your daughter?" "My daughter!" said Ali, with a smile; "that is a different case.—Her heart is a property which belongs only to herself, and is not within my controul. But, what does my Zulima think?" "That I love him," replied she, in a soft voice;—"but, ought I, without knowing him farther?" "Behold," cried the young man, in a transport of joy, and betraying him-

self, "I am Yasouf!" "What!" retorted Zulima, "Yasouf!—the generous, the beneficent Yasouf!—then has not my heart deceived me!" "And I," said Ali, pressing him in his aged arms, "discovered in thy features the image of every virtue. But, excellent Yasouf, before offering your hand to Zulima, ought you not to investigate her character?"—"Oh! will Zulima deign to vouchsafe me that hand to which I only aspire!" said Yasouf, approaching her with a tender solicitude. "That depends on my father!" said Zulima; "if, as he says, my heart is a treasure, it will remain with you to merit the possession of it."—At these words she with-

withdrew, casting a look upon Yasouf, expressive of her wishes that he might succeed.

"Attend, dear Yasouf," said Ali, in a manner as if imparting a secret. "The heart of my daughter is the object of your affections; but I must inform you, that there is a rival with whom you must dispute the possession.—He is more formidable than you imagine—his name is Ali!"

"Ali!" exclaimed Yasouf in a rage: "have you not just now pronounced his sentence!"—"But what is his crime?—Indeed, nothing more than what you yourself have done!"—

"Behold, this is the cause which

exasperates me,—he always anticipates me. If I commence any work, he always perfects it; if I form a desire, he directly makes it his own: in short, the universe resounds with his name, and mine is forgotten."

"Pray disclose the design of your visit here."

"To bury this in his heart!" vociferated Yasouf, at the same time producing the poniard which he had concealed in his bosom. "Not content with being my rival in generosity, he dares to contend with me in love.—By the holy Prophet I swear——"

"The means you propose," said Ali, "are incontrovertibly the most

most sure to put an end to the torments he inflicts.—Listen, Yasouf! To-morrow morning!—Every dawn he repairs to the adjoining wood; there he kneels, and addresses his prayers to the Eternal for the happiness of his fellow-men.—Seize this moment—and with one thrust of the poniard—What think you of this plan?"

"He addresses his prayers, you say," replied Yasouf, "to the Eternal for the happiness of his fellow-men!—But, tell me, O my Father, is Ali indeed so good?"

"His heart certainly is not bad: but there is none, except the Eternal, good.—Fail not to-morrow morning, and when he is poniarded, my

daughter shall be thine!—Remember!"

"Your daughter shall be mine! but why so early as to-morrow? Permit me a little longer time, and I shall be able to investigate his character more accurately."

"Know that to-morrow he is to become the husband of my daughter!"

"Her husband!—it is too much! Lead me to the spot!"

Ali conducted Yasouf to the ground, where he daily retired to pray. "There," said he, "is the place, and behind these bushes you may safely lurk, concealed. The spot is solitary—it is upon this verdant hillock.—Be firm—one

plunge

plunge of the poniard, and all will be over!"

"Here, here, it is, that Ali says his prayers!" repeated Yasouf, in a faltering voice; "and could not you have selected some other place?"

"Do you hesitate,—you who wish to become renowned!—Ali will always close the avenue to your fame; while he lives, you have nothing to hope for;—and my daughter——"

"Your daughter!—It is decided —he shall perish!"

Ineffectual were the discourse of Ali, and the soft words of his daughter, to render his bosom tranquil during the remainder of the

evening; in vain did he try to forget his agitation in repose; his burning cheeks by turns dried the tears that watered his pillow; till at length, weary of this distracted state, he arose, and in the garden awaited the return of Aurora.

The first rays of the sun had scarcely began to illuminate the horizon, before Zulima, brilliant as the morning star, came to seek him.—"My father," said she, "has sent me to attend you, to say that he intreats you to hasten the moment which is to ensure you the possession of my hand!"—Yasouf would have pressed that hand to his heart, had she not disengaged herself from his arms, and dis-

disappeared in the surrounding shrubbery.

Yasouf seized the poniard, and shook with horror as he felt its point.—A long time he strayed among the vistas of the garden, calling upon Zulima, without receiving any answer. He then sought her father, with the same success; he next met a slave, and, having extended his hand to him unnoticed, he plunged into the thickest part of the wood, exclaiming, "Unhappy man that I am!"

After having made a hundred turns, he came again in sight of the spot which Ali had pointed out to him.—Tremblingly he made his way through the balmy hedges, and per-

perceived an ancient man with his head bowed to the earth, his hands joined, and his lips engaged in earnest prayer.

Yasouf paused a moment.—With a convulsive shudder, he drew the dagger—and raised his hand to strike——but nature and humanity recovered their wonted influence; he threw the murderous weapon from him, and exclaimed, "Let him live!—for once I will be his superior in generosity!—Live, and be the envied husband of Zulima!"

At these words, he essayed to fly; but Zulima sprang forward and impeded his retreat. "Yasouf," said she, melting into tears, "my

"my dear Yasouf,—this proof is sufficient!—I am thine for ever!"

Yasouf, astonished and disconcerted, looked at his intended victim, and was instantly after enfolded in the arms of Ali!

"Sacred Powers!" exclaimed he, overwhelmed with contrition, shame and rapture, "Pardon, O my father, the malice which self-love and envy had lighted up in my soul!—Nature and humanity have triumphed over the infatuation of my intellects!—Nay, I indulge a hope that Ali too will grant me his generous pardon."

"Behold Ali is now in your arms!" replied the sage: "He forgives

forgives you, and presents the hand of his daughter as the most precious guarantee he can offer of his tenderness !"

Yasouf knelt at his feet, and Zulima followed the same movement ; Ali now placed his hand upon the heads of the happy lovers, and he ejaculated, " Deign, thou Omnipotent, to regard with a parental eye the two mortals whom I esteem on earth next to thyself!"

" Oh ! thou best and most respectable of human kind," cried Yasouf, " thou art he who hast taught me the cause whence I wandered so wide from the path of happiness. The love of human

kind

kind is thy guide.—Self-love was mine.—I sought to eclipse thee from envy, and I found that every tongue resounded with thy purest praise. My riches were ostentation, and my greatness chagrin! Henceforth thou shalt be my model, my counsellor, and my tutor in the difficult art of doing good! I have found that envy is not the road to happiness; and that he who would be truly blessed in this life, must copy thy example, and seek it only in that virtue which arises from the purest motives."

"The rule is simple," replied Ali: "consult your own heart, and it will be an infallible guide!—Be the happiness of my Zulima, the

esteem her father, and never forget that he who makes the wretched sensible of their dependence, tarnishes the most beautiful gift that mortals have received from heaven, Beneficence."

THE END.

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